Resources

More information about proper tree care and management around your home is available from the following groups.

A wide variety of information about tree selection and care is available from:

Missouri Department of Conservation

Community Forestry
P.O. Box 180
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
573/751-4115
www.missouriconservation.org

Information about professional certification and standards is available from:

International Society of Arboriculture

P.O. Box 3129
Champaign, IL 61826-3129
www.isa-arbor.com

Information about tree planting and proper care is available from:

National Arbor Day Foundation

100 Arbor Avenue
Nebraska City, NE 68410
401/472-5655
www.arborday.org

EXPERTS AGREE

DON'T TOP YOUR TREE

1-877-40 NO TOP
(877-406-6867)

Call for more information on the myths associated with the obsolete and mutilating practice of tree topping and what can be done to prevent it.

A program of the Missouri Community Forestry Council and Forest ReLeaf of Missouri. Financial assistance provided by the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Forest ReLeaf OF MISSOURI

Serving nature and you

MISSOURI COMMUNITY FORESTRY COUNCIL

F00009   9/09

THE
KINDEST CUT

When a tree is in the wrong place, removing it completely is the best option.

Trees around a home can increase energy efficiency; provide landscape beauty, food and homes for wildlife; protect the property from weather extremes and erosion—provided that the right tree was planted in the right place. Trees can become a liability, however, if they are planted too close to a house, or the branches hang over a powerline.

Topping is not the answer

Many people respond to limbs falling by pruning improperly, often leaving the trunk and removing the large branches. Topping, as this technique is called, will not solve the problem of the tree being in the wrong place. Topping kills the tree over time by leaving large open wounds that never close and subject the tree to disease and rot.

Topped trees can regain their original height in as little as two years. The resulting fast-growing shoots are extremely weak, making them more susceptible to breakage and storm damage. Topping also results in rot. The weak sprouts and the decay increase your chances of property damage and liability.

When replacing a tree, choose one that at maturity will fit the space.

The right tree in the right place is an asset that increases as the years progress.

The kindest cut is at the base

If a tree has become too tall or wide for the location, the best solution is to remove the tree completely and replant the area with a tree that will fit the spot through all stages of its life.

The decision to remove a live tree that has started to cause problems may be difficult or heart wrenching if you have emotional ties to it, such as one planted on a special occasion or as a memorial for a family member.
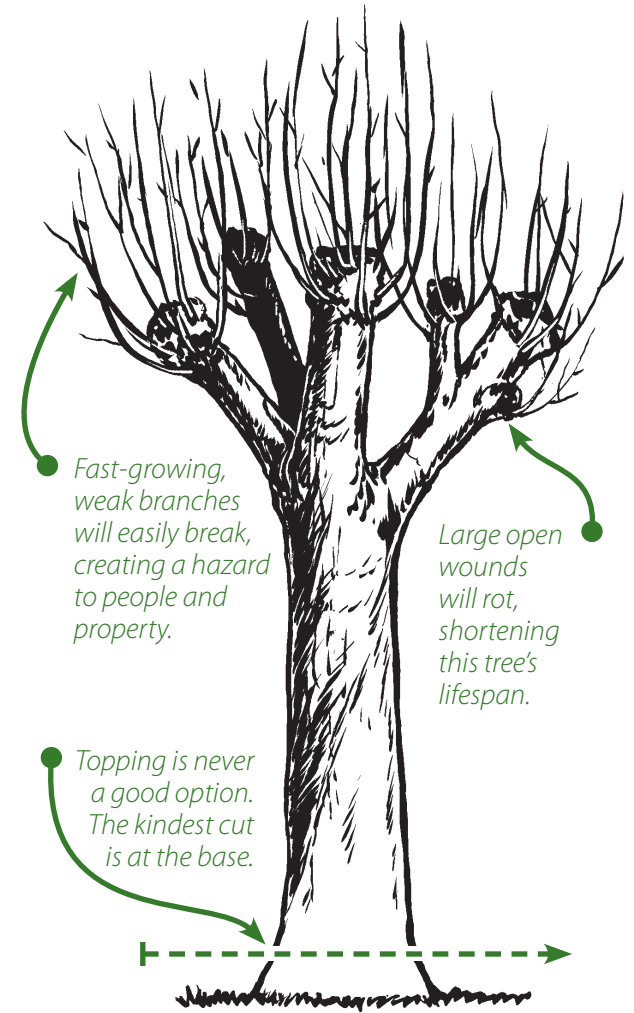
As difficult as it may be, sometimes the kindest cut of all is the one made at the base of the trunk. While removing a large tree may cost more than topping, over time you will spend more time and money if you top a tree.

Right tree, right place

After you decide to remove a problem tree, follow these tips to ensure its replacement won't become a liability.

1 Determine where you want to plant a tree and what benefits you want it to provide, such as shading a home or driveway, separating two ownerships, screening a neighbor's backyard, or providing cover for songbirds.

2 Calculate how much space you have by looking up for powerline and around for obstructions, like buildings.

3 Call 1-800-DIGRITE to find underground utility lines before you plant.

4 See how much sunlight the area receives.

5 Choose a tree that at maturity will fit that space and thrive in the available sunlight.

Topping a tree will not solve the problem of the tree being in the wrong place.

Fast-growing, weak branches will easily break, creating a hazard to people and property.

Large open wounds will rot, shortening this tree's lifespan.

Topping is never a good option. The kindest cut is at the base.

For more information on how to select and plant trees around homes, go to *www.mdc.mo.gov/8804*; or send an e-mail message to *pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov* or call 573/751-4115 for a free copy of "Missouri Urban Trees" from the Missouri Department of Conservation.